



# City of Huntington Beach

File #: 21-273

MEETING DATE: 4/19/2021

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**SUBMITTED TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oliver Chi, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Sean Crumby, Director of Public Works

**Subject:**

**Adopt Resolution No. 2021-10 requesting that the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) fund and immediately proceed with Surfside-Sunset Beach Nourishment Project Stage 13 from Anaheim Bay Harbor to Newport Bay in Orange County, California**

**Statement of Issue:**

This resolution is drafted to support Stage 13 of the Surfside-Sunset Beach Nourishment Project. This action recognizes the importance of beach sand nourishment projects to the health, sustainability, and vitality of Huntington Beach's coastline, and how important these projects are to protecting both public and private property/assets along the coast. Without these sand replenishment projects, the City's coastline is prone to damage from winter storms and high tides, as the sand acts as a natural buffer, protecting the coast from damaging waves and tidal action.

**Financial Impact:**

City Council previously authorized the funding of the City's share of the costs for the design and construction of the Stage 13 project in the Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget. The funding for the City's portion of the project costs have already been transmitted to the County of Orange in June 2018 in the amount of \$281,966.00.

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt Resolution 2021-10, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Huntington Beach Requesting that the United States Army Corps of Engineers Fund and Immediately Proceed with Surfside-Sunset Beach Nourishment Project Stage 13 from Anaheim Bay Harbor to Newport Bay in Orange County, California."

**Alternative Action(s):**

Do not adopt the resolution and direct staff accordingly.

**Analysis:**

The natural migration of sand happens in a southerly fashion from Surfside beach, which is adjacent

to the mouth of the San Gabriel River, transporting the sand down the coast and replenishing the eroded sand between Anaheim Harbor Bay to Newport Bay. However, the construction of engineered flood control structures by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the San Gabriel River and Santa Ana River between 1930s - 1950s prevents the transportation of sediment and sand down these rivers to naturally replenish sand depleted by winter storms and other sand depletion activities. Thus, the coastline between Anaheim Harbor Bay to Newport Bay is dependent on beach sand nourishment projects to replenish eroded sand.

In 1962, Congress passed the Rivers and Harbors Act, which requires USACE to address the impacts of the constructed flood control structures on natural sand depositions. This led to the first beach nourishment project in 1964 (Stage 1), which deposited 1.5 million cubic yards of sand on the beach along Surfside. These projects were scheduled to be conducted every 5-7 years, and there have been twelve such projects since 1964. The last beach nourishment project was conducted in 2010 (Stage 12). Stage 13 was slated to commence in 2018, but it has been delayed indefinitely by the Federal government, due to a lack of funding.

Staff from the City and other stakeholders, which includes the County of Orange, the Department of Boating and Waterways, City of Newport Beach, City of Seal Beach, and the Surfside Stormwater Protection District, meet with USACE on a regular basis to receive updates regarding the proposed Stage 13 project. To date, USACE staff has been unable to move the project forward from the project list to the list of funded projects. The reasons for the lack of funding for the project have not been made clear to USACE staff, and the project appears to be at an impasse, with no indication that Stage 13 will receive any funding in the near future.

Without any beach nourishment project since 2010, the coastline between Anaheim Bay Harbor and Newport Bay has experienced noticeable and dramatic degradation. In certain segments of the nearly 68,000 linear feet (approximately 12 miles) of coastline, the sand has eroded to the point that homes in the Surfside community are now threatened by winter storms and high tides. Other sections of beach within this area are no longer accessible during high tides, and coastal assets are now threatened, such as beach parking lots, access roads, beach boardwalk, and other structures. This new threat garnered national attention in July 2020 when the City of Newport Beach's beach parking lots, streets, and other public/private properties on the Balboa peninsula were flooded with up to three feet of damaging and corrosive salt water. This type of event was not the result of a large winter storm, and could be a precursor of what the new normal will be without the protective buffer that beach sand provides.

This resolution was drafted to draw public attention to the plight of the eroded coastline between Surfside (Seal Beach) and Newport Beach, as well as serving to notify the USACE and the Federal government that this project is important to the community and is direly needed. The coastline under threat is not only a local asset, but also a regional asset enjoyed by residents and tourists from all over the state. As such, this coastline should be viewed as a resource that must be protected for future generations. Failure to act immediately could not only result in property damage, but may also result in loss of life if dangerous flooding occurs.

This resolution will also be adopted by the governing boards of the other local project stakeholders in the upcoming months. This includes the Cities of Newport Beach and Seal Beach as well as the County of Orange. Following the adoption of this resolution, City staff will launch a coordinated

media campaign to generate interest and draw attention to the dire need for the beach nourishment project, including reaching out to local press and posting information regarding the status of the project on social media platforms. The media campaign will focus on the present and potential future impacts to our coastline, if the Stage 13 project and other future beach nourishment projects are further delayed, which are essential to protecting our coastline and coastal assets, both private and public.

**Environmental Status:**

Not applicable.

**Strategic Plan Goal:**

Infrastructure & Parks

**Attachment(s):**

1. Resolution No. 2021-10, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Huntington Beach Requesting that the United States Army Corps of Engineers Fund and Immediately Proceed with Surfside-Sunset Beach Nourishment Project Stage 13 from Anaheim Bay Harbor to Newport Bay in Orange County, California."